

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for creating multimedia electronic communications, the system comprising:
  - a network interface to a communication network through which a user can access the system;
  - a host processor coupled to the network interface, the host processor operable to create the multimedia electronic communications based on at least one creative content item; and
  - a creative content database coupled to the host processor, the creative content database containing a plurality of creative content items, wherein each creative content item includes media content selectable by the user and advertisement content, such that the advertisement content is embedded as an integral feature of the selected media content or is integrally associated with the respective creative content item.
2. The system according to claim 1, further comprising an advertisement content database coupled to the host processor, the advertisement database containing a plurality of advertisement content items corresponding to a respective creative content item such that upon selection of media content from the creative content database by a user, the corresponding advertisement content is integrated with the respective creative content item.
3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the media content in each creative content item includes at least one of a static image, digital video, animated video, live action video, text, and audio.

4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the media content is less than or equal to 90 seconds in duration.
5. The system according to claim 4, wherein the media content is less than 60 seconds in duration.
6. The system according to claim 1, wherein the media content includes content from at least one of motion pictures and television shows.
7. The system according to claim 1, wherein the media content includes satirical interpretations of content from at least one of motion pictures and television shows.
8. The system according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the media content and the advertisement content includes original content produced by an operator of the system or for the operator of the system.
9. The system according to claim 1, wherein the advertisement content is integrated into the media content by product placement.
10. The system according to claim 8, wherein the product placement is accomplished through one of a leader segment, a trailer segment, an audio jingle, and trademarked or branded text or graphics appearing in the media content.
11. The system according to claim 1, wherein the host processor is

operable to allow the user to preview the media content prior to selection thereof.

12. The system according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of creative content units in the creative content database is organized by categories or themes.

13. The system according to claim 1, wherein the host processor is operable to search the creative content database according to search criteria inputted by the user.

14. The system according to claim 1, further comprising a user database which stores creative communications previously created by the user.

15. The system according to claim 14, wherein the host processor is operable to allow the user to controllably provide a selected group of other users with access to the user's previously created communications stored in the user database.

16. The system according to claim 14, wherein the user database also stores information regarding user preferences and behavior collected from the user's transactions with the system.

17. The system according to claim 1, wherein the host processor is operable to deliver the creative communication to a recipient via a URL contained in an e-mail, wherein the URL links the recipient to the storage

location of the creative communication for execution thereof.

18. The system according to claim 1, wherein the host processor is operable to deliver the creative communication to a recipient as an executable program attached to an e-mail.

19. The system according to claim 1, further comprising a workstation computer coupled to the network interface, wherein the creative communication can be downloaded to the workstation computer from the network interface.

20. The system according to claim 1, wherein the advertisement content contained in a creative communication is interactive.

21. The system according to claim 1, wherein the advertisement content contains a link to a remote network destination providing additional information about a sponsor or its products.

22. The system according to claim 1, further comprising:  
a personalization module coupled to the host processor, the personalization module allowing the user to personalize at least one of the media content and the advertisement content in a creative content item.

23. The system according to claim 22, wherein the personalization module is operable to integrate both static and dynamic content into the media content.

24. The system according to claim 22, wherein the personalization module is operable to integrate user-provided images, text, sound, and/or motions into the media content.
25. The system according to claim 22, wherein the personalization module is operable to integrate two or more creative content items.
26. The system according to claim 22, wherein the personalization module enables the user to modify both static and dynamic aspects of the media content.
27. The system according to claim 22, wherein the personalization module is operable to modify a creative content item by multiple choice or open choice text replacement.
28. The system according to claim 22, wherein the personalization module is operable to modify a creative content item by alteration of audio dialogue in the creative communication.
29. The system according to claim 22, wherein the personalization module is operable to modify a creative content item by a melding process.
30. The system according to claim 29, wherein the melding process incorporates changes to an image in the media content.
31. The system according to claim 22, wherein the personalization

module is operable to modify a creative content item by a bluescreening process.

32. The system according to claim 22, wherein the personalization module is operable to modify a creative content item by a morphing process.

33. The system according to claim 22, further comprising an electronic filter having predetermined tolerance criteria and operable to prevent the user from altering a creative content item in a manner prohibited by the tolerance criteria.

34. The system according to claim 22, further comprising an electronic filter having predetermined tolerance criteria and operable to remove the advertisement content upon determination that the creative content item has been altered in a manner prohibited by the tolerance criteria.

35. The system according to claim 22, further comprising an electronic filter having predetermined tolerance criteria and operable to remove association of the advertisement content from the entertainment content information upon determination that the creative content item has been altered in a manner prohibited by the tolerance criteria.

36. A multimedia electronic communication comprising:  
media content containing both video and audio components; and  
advertisement content which is substantively embedded as an integral aspect of the media content.

37. A publicly accessible kiosk for creating multimedia electronic communications, the kiosk comprising:

a host processor operable to create the multimedia electronic communications using at least one creative content item; and

a creative content database coupled to the host processor, the creative content database containing media content selectable by a user, wherein the media content contains both video and audio components.

38. The kiosk of claim 37, further comprising:

a local processor housed in the kiosk; and

a network interface coupled to the local processor, the network interface providing an interface to the Internet, wherein the host processor and the creative communication database are at a location remote from the kiosk, whereby the local processor can communicate with the host processor through the Internet.

39. The kiosk of claim 37, wherein the electronic communications are deliverable to recipients via the Internet.

40. The kiosk of claim 37, further comprising:

a recording device housed in the kiosk and coupled to the host processor, wherein the recording device is operable to record a multimedia electronic communication on a portable storage media.

41. The kiosk of claim 40, wherein the portable storage media is an optical disk.

42. A system for producing media package on demand for delivery in real-time, comprising:

a plurality of media items each accessible from a data source according to a unique identifier;

a multi-linear sequencing script designating a plurality of modularized sequence slots for indicating a temporal and spatial arrangement of each of the plurality of media items relative to each other during playback of the media package;

a sequence compiler for assembling a media package according to the multi-linear sequencing script.

43. The system according to claim 42, wherein the sequence compiler assembles the media package by using associating each of the modularized sequence slots with a respective pointer to indicate the media item to be executed at each slot.

44. The system according to claim 42, wherein each slot has a temporal property for designating a duration of execution of a media item to be executed in the slot.

45. The system according to claim 42, wherein the modularized sequencing script enable a first media item to be executed in series with a second media item.

46. The system according to claim 45, wherein the sequence compiler is operable to execute a first media item in series with a second

media item and to insert a sprite track or other digital element in transition between the first and second media items during playback.

47. The system according to claim 42, wherein the modularized sequencing script enable a first media item to be executed in parallel with a second media item.

48. The system according to claim 47, wherein the modularized sequencing script further enables a third media item to be executed in series with at least one of the first media item and the second media item.

49. The system according to claim 42, further comprising a cached multi-media server for streaming delivering the media package for playback in real-time.

50. The system according to claim 42, wherein the assembled media package can be created on demand by a user in which the user selects at least one media item to be incorporated into the media package.

51. The system according to claim 42, wherein the sequence compiler is operable to incorporate both static and dynamic media items into the multi-linear sequencing script.

52. The system according to claim 51, comprising a first dynamic media item having a first duration time and a second dynamic media item having a second duration time shorter than the first duration time, and wherein

the sequence compiler is operable to repeatedly loop execution of the second media item in parallel with the duration of the first media item during playback to temporally fill a modularized slot designating the second media item.

53. The system according to claim 51, comprising a static media item and a dynamic media item having a duration time, and the sequence compiler is operable to hold a display time of the static media item in parallel with the duration time of execution of the dynamic media item during playback in accordance with the multi-linear sequencing script.

54. The system for creating multimedia electronic communications according to claim 42, further comprising:

a network interface to a communication network through which a user can access the system;

a host processor coupled to the network interface, the host processor operable to create the multimedia electronic communications based on at least one media item;

a creative content database coupled to the host processor, the creative content database containing a plurality of creative media items; and

a sponsorship content database coupled to the host processor, the sponsorship content database containing a plurality of sponsorship media items,

wherein each creative media item includes media content selectable by the user and is integrally associated with at least one sponsorship media item, such that selection of a creative media item by the user

automatically results in selection of the associated sponsorship media item, and

wherein the sequence compiler incorporates the selected creative media item and associated sponsorship media item into a multimedia electronic communication to generate a playback sequence according to the multi-linear sequencing script.

55. A method for creating multimedia electronic communications, comprising:

producing a creative content database coupled to a host processor, the creative content database containing a plurality of creative content items, wherein each creative content item includes media content selectable by a user;

forming an advertisement content database coupled to the host processor, the advertisement database containing a plurality of advertisement content items corresponding to a respective creative content item;

providing a host site interface to enable a user to connect to the host processor through a communication network; and

upon selection of a creative content item by a user, integrating the corresponding advertisement content with the media content of the selected creative content item to form a basis for a multimedia electronic communication, such that the advertisement content is embedded as a substantive feature of the media content information.

56. The method according to claim 55, wherein the step of producing a creative content database includes creating original content by an

operator of the host site.

57. The method according to claim 55, wherein the step of producing a creative content database includes creating original content by a third party for an operator of the host site.

58. The method according to claim 57, wherein the step of producing a creative content database includes creating original content by a licensee of the operator of the host site.

59. The method according to claim 55, wherein the step of producing a creative content database includes obtaining a stock selection of proprietary materials owned by third parties not associated with the host site.

60. The method according to claim 55, wherein the advertisement content is integrated into the media content by product placement.

61. The method according to claim 60, wherein the product placement is accomplished through one of a leader segment, a trailer segment, an audio jingle, and trademarked or branded text or graphics appearing in the media content.

62. The method according to claim 55, wherein the step of producing the creative content database includes organizing the plurality of creative content items into categories and/or themes to facilitate searching and preview by users.

63. The method according to claim 55, further comprising collecting and storing information regarding user preferences and behavior data based on users' transactions through the host site.

64. The method according to claim 55, further comprising storing multimedia electronic communications created by users based on the selected integrated media and advertisement content items.

65. The method according to claim 64, further comprising delivering to a recipient a multimedia electronic communication via a URL link contained in an e-mail, wherein the multimedia electronic communication is based on an integrated media and advertisement content item selected by a user, and wherein the URL links the recipient to the storage location of the multimedia electronic communication for execution thereof.

66. The method according to claim 64, further comprising delivering to a recipient a multimedia electronic communication as an executable attachment to an e-mail, wherein the multimedia electronic communication is based on an integrated media and advertisement content item selected by a user.

67. The method according to claim 64, wherein the stored multimedia electronic communications can be downloaded to a user's workstation computer from the host site storage location through the communication network.

68. The method according to claim 55, wherein the advertisement content contains a link to a remote network destination providing additional information about a sponsor or its products.

69. The method according to claim 55, further comprising enabling a user to personalize the media content of a selected creative content item.

70. The method according to claim 69, further comprising, for each advertisement content item, setting predetermined tolerance criteria to prevent the user from altering a creative content item in a manner prohibited by the tolerance criteria.

71. The method according to claim 69, further comprising, for each advertisement content item, setting predetermined tolerance criteria to remove the corresponding advertisement content from the media content of a selected creative content item upon a determination that the creative content item has been altered by a user in a manner prohibited by the tolerance criteria.

72. The method according to claim 69, further comprising, for each advertisement content item, setting predetermined tolerance criteria to prevent or remove association of the corresponding advertisement content from the entertainment content information of a selected creative content item upon a determination that the creative content item has been altered in a manner prohibited by the tolerance criteria.

73. The method according to claim 69, wherein the user is enabled

to personalize the selected creative content item by integrating both static and dynamic content into the media content.

74. The method according to claim 73, wherein the user is enabled to personalize the selected creative content item by integrating user-provided images, text, sound, and/or motions into the media content.

75. The method according to claim 69, wherein the user is enabled to personalize the selected creative content item by modifying both static and dynamic aspects of the media content in the selected creative content item.

76. The method according to claim 75, wherein the user is enabled to modify the selected creative content item by a melding process.

77. The method according to claim 75, wherein the user is enabled to modify the selected creative content item by a bluescreening process.

78. The method according to claim 75 wherein the user is enabled to modify the selected creative content item by a morphing process.

79. The method according to claim 55 further comprising recording onto a portable storage media a user created multimedia electronic communication based on an integrated media and corresponding advertisement content item selected by the user.

80. A method for creating multimedia electronic communications,

comprising:

producing a creative content database coupled to a host processor, the creative content database containing a plurality of creative content items, wherein each creative content item includes media content selectable by a user;

forming an advertisement content database coupled to the host processor, the advertisement database containing a plurality of advertisement content items corresponding to a respective creative content item;

providing a host site interface to enable a user to connect to the host processor through a communication network;

upon selection of a creative content item by a user, integrally associating the corresponding advertisement content with the media content of the selected creative content item; and

compiling a playback sequence containing at least the creative content item and the associated advertisement content arranged to be executed in parallel and/or in series according to a predetermined script so as to produce a multimedia electronic communication.

81. The method according to claim 80, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises arranging the at least the creative content item and the associated advertisement content in modular format.

82. The method according to claim 80, wherein the compiled playback sequence is executable in real-time during playback.

83. The method according to claim 80, wherein compiling the

playback sequence comprises generating a series of pointers designating a respective content item for playback at an appropriate timing according to the predetermined script.

84. The method according to claim 80, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises incorporating both static and dynamic content items into the scripted playback sequence.

85. The method according to claim 80, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises incorporating a first dynamic content item having a first duration time and a second dynamic content item having a second duration time shorter than the first duration time, such that execution of the second content item is repeatedly looped in parallel with the duration of the first content item during playback.

86. The method according to claim 80, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises incorporating a static content item and a dynamic content item having a duration time, such that a display time of the static content item is held for a time period in parallel with the duration time of execution of the dynamic content item during playback.

87. The method according to claim 80, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises arranging a first content item in series with a second content item and inserting a sprite track as a transition between the first and second content items during playback.

88. A method for producing media package on demand for delivery in real-time, comprising:

providing a plurality of media items each accessible from a data source according to a unique identifier;

defining a multi-linear sequencing script designating a plurality of modularized sequence slots for indicating a temporal and spatial arrangement of each of the plurality of media items relative to each other during playback of the media package;

compiling a playback sequence to assemble the media package according to the multi-linear sequencing script.

89. The method according to claim 88, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises generating a series of pointers designating a respective media item for playback at an appropriate timing according to the multi-linear sequencing script.

90. The method according to claim 88, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises incorporating both static and dynamic media items into the scripted playback sequence.

91. The method according to claim 88, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises incorporating a first media item to be executed in series with a second media item.

92. The method according to claim 88, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises incorporating a first media item in series with a

second media item and inserting a sprite track or other digital element in transition between the first and second media items during playback.

93. The method according to claim 88, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises incorporating a first media item to be executed in parallel with a second media item.

94. The method according to claim 93, wherein compiling the playback sequence comprises incorporating a third media item to be executed in series with at least one of the first media item and the second media item.

95. The method according to claim 88, further comprising delivering the media package for playback in real-time via cached multi-media server for streaming delivery.

96. The system according to claim 88, comprising selecting at least one media item to be incorporated into the media package to create the assembled media package on demand, wherein the selecting is performed by an end-user of the system.